



(U) Part III of Remembrance of NSA Thanksgivings Past...

FROM: SIGINT Communications
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(U) We asked NSA'ers to send us their stories of spending Thanksgiving in unusual circumstances (see the [call for submissions](#)). Here's what we learned...

(U) Thanksgiving on the High Seas

(U//FOUO) This is a story of Thanksgiving during the Iran-Iraq war in 1987, when the Iranian navy was attacking oil tankers in the Persian Gulf and US warships were escorting the "Ernst Will" tanker convoys through the Straits of Hormuz into the Arabian Sea.

(U//FOUO) We were aboard the USS Standley, and had exited the Straits into the Arabian Sea, which placed us under the jurisdiction of the Commander of Task Force 800 (CTF800). The Captain of the Standley wanted us to transfer to another ship so that the Standley's crew could proceed to their next port call.

(U//FOUO) On the night before Thanksgiving, CTF800 ordered our helicopter transfer to the USS Whiteplains. So, at 0600, Thanksgiving morning, we were lifted by wire, and dropped by wire, onto the Whiteplains. We were invited to join the Whiteplains crew for a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner; wonderful..because, after all, they were the supply ship for CTF800 and had been saving the choice cuts for themselves!

(U//FOUO) Watching the sailors on board the Whiteplains work 24 hrs a day, supplying the long line of ships, generated a great deal of my respect for their ability to coordinate this feat. After our meal, we transferred to another ship and resumed operations in the Gulf.

- [REDACTED]

(U) Alone in the Albanian Alps

(TS//SI) I believe it was 1996, and I was one of the Agency's electrical engineers in their facilities department. One of the programs I typically assisted with was the Agency's Third Party program. We got a job from G Group to have power run up a mountain to a remote collection facility currently running on generators. The schedule had me going to Albania in November. I traveled to the site with several European Technical Center members, but their work ended much earlier, so they left to go back to Wiesbaden before the holiday. I was the sole American on the mountain top that Thanksgiving. Fortunately, I saved an appropriate MRE (Meal Ready-to-Eat) to have for dinner.

(U//FOUO) Of intense interest to Government employees at this time was the fight between Congress and the President. This

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resulted in furloughs of Government employees, including several people I know. My main contact here at the Agency would call me about every other day on the ringdown phone and assure me that I had not been furloughed for that day.

-- [REDACTED]

(U) Thanks to everyone who shared Thanksgiving stories!

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